

Some Coffee House Dec. the 26. 1742
OVER
SHOES,
OVER
BOOTS,
OR, THE
Politicians at their Wits-End.

WITH AN
ENQUIRY,
Whether any Former A G E has
equall'd the present in BLUNDERS.

Humanum est errare.

Humanum est Errare

L O N D O N:

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T H E
P R E F A C E.

TH E Title of this Pamphlet being somewhat uncommon and ludicrous, it is expected, and even it is proper I should, in some Measure, keep up to it, though not so far as to sport with the Calamities of my Country, or to laugh immoderately in a Time of publick Mourning. The chief Design of the following Sheets is chiefly to convince my Readers that the Evils now complained of are nothing new, nor peculiar to this Nation; that all Ages and Countries have experienced the like, or worse; and that since we have no more than Neighbours Share, we ought not to give a Loose to immoderate repining or murmuring.

To be dissatisfied with our own Condition, and to envy that of others, has ever been the Misfortune of Mankind; at least in private
Life;

THE PREFACE.

Life; and I believe the same Judgment will hold good, with respect to Communities; as for Instance, the People of this Nation, or at least a great many of them, imagine that no Times could be worse than the Present; and that their Neighbours Condition is much better than their own, which is so far from being true, that if we take a View of all the Countries round us, we shall find England to be the happiest of them. France is begg'd by extravagant Remittances: Germany ruin'd by an intestine War: Italy upon the Point of being over-run and plundered by foreign Troops. Spain, Hungary, Denmark, Russia, Holland, and Sweden, reduced to the last Extremity by grievous Taxes. 'Tis true, ours are very Heavy; but we can better bear them than any of our Neighbours; and there is room to hope, that our Pressures will soon be at an End. Why should we despond? We have a gracious King, who is willing to listen to our Complaints, and redress our Grievances: We have an honest Parliament, that will not fail to call to an Account, and Punish the Authors of our present Calamities; and when once that Idol Corruption is pulled down, there is no fear but our foreign and domestick Affairs will resume their former glorious Lustre.

OVER



OVER
SHOES,
OVER
BOOTS, &c.

WHEN the Wrath of God is kindled against a Nation, his usual Scourges are either a Famine, a Pestilence or a War; but when the Measure of a Nation's Iniquity is full, he sends them a weak Prince or a bungling Minister, as including all the Woes of the other Three. — A Plague, a Famine or a War, are indeed violent, but generally of a short Continuance; they are rather a Warning, or a shaking of the Rod, than a real Punishment, whereas the Miseries occasion'd by bad Princes or Ministers are far from being temporary; they extend to future Generations, and often end in the utter Ruin of Nations. On the other Hand, what a Blessing it is to a People to be

govern'd by a wise and mild Prince, or by an able and disinterested Minister; it is the strongest Proof that can be given of the Smiles of Heaven, especially when that Prince or that Minister have military as well as pacifick Virtues. *Ejaminondas* and *Belsharius* have done more real Service to their respective Countries, than any meer Cabinet Projector could boast of. If then weak or wicked Rulers are the Instruments of God to punish national Vice, may we not fairly say that all *Europe*, nay the whole Earth (except *England*) is now under the Lash of Heaven? Talk almost of what Country you will, the Cry is a cowardly King or a blundering Minister: Even in *France*, how many *Pasquinades* are flung at the Premier, though he is by some counted the wisest Man now living. The Master of the Marionettes at *Paris*, paid dearly some Weeks ago for *Punch's* Wit. The poor Queen of *Hungary* is quite undone by blundering Ministers. The *Spaniards* begin now to miss their late able Minister *Don Joseph Patinbo*, they having lately blunder'd themselves into an unequal War, and the *Swedes* have wisely follow'd their Example; but the *Russians* will soon make them sensible of their Error, not by the Wisdom of their Councils (for they have as little to boast of in that respect as their Neighbours) but by the Sharpness of their Steel. Well may the Chiefs of the *Calmucks* be guilty of a Blunder by seeking

Booty

Booty in *Sweden* and *Finland*, where none was ever yet to be found, while the politest Nations fall into the greatest Absurdities: What in the Name of Heaven could possess *Spain* to provide Transports to land Troops in *Italy*, when Admiral *Hadto k* lay in the *Mediterranean* with a powerful Fleet? The sailing of the Marquis *D'antin's* Squadron to the *West Indies*, had as much meaning in it as the March of *Calgula's* Army; the expensive Marches of the *French* Troops in various Parts of *Germany*, without firing a Gun, or declaring War, seems to be another inexplicable Secret. As for *Britain*, 'tis generally allow'd that she has had more than a Neighbour's Share of Blunders; but as they have been so often canvass'd by abler Hands, both in the Senate and in the weekly Papers, we think it needless to enter into a Discussion of them here. 'Tis true, we have lately heard of some prime Ministers being made publick Examples of: Cardinal *Coscia* was stript of both his Plunder and Authority; Count *Hoyms* in *Saxony*, was degraded, fined and imprison'd; a blundering Minister in *Russia* was lately sentenced to keep Company with the Bears in *Siberia*; and his Successor was scarce settled in his Employment, when he began a roguish Correspondence with the Enemies of his Country, for which he was deservedly kick'd out of Power. Thus if one Harpey is cashier'd, he is generally succeeded by another more rapacious.

I could give a great many more Instances to prove the present Age to be more remarkable for Blunders than any former was for Wisdom or Conquests; but a Question will naturally arise, whether this epidemical Propensity to blunder be peculiar to the present Times, or whether former Ages were not as blundering as this we live in. Some People will tell you that this will hardly bear a Dispute, for that the very Perfection of Folly is the Characteristick of the present Governing Part of Mankind. These Censurers, like the Generality of old People, are for ever praising the Times past, and for condemning the present; but if we look back to former Ages, we'll find the Appearance of a good Prince or a great Man to be infinitely more rare than that of a Comet. During the long Succession of the *Ægyptian* Kings, we hear but of one *Pharaoh* and one *Joseph*, that really study'd the Welfare of their Fellow Creatures: Most of the other Kings were either lazy Drones, or unmerciful Tyrants; and as for their Ministers, they seldom or ever continued longer in Power than they flatter'd the Passions or minister'd to the Pleasures of their Masters. They generally owed their Preferment to Fancy or Caprice; and hence it was that their Fall was as sudden as their Rise. In this Manner did all the *Eastern* Monarchs treat their Ministers or their head Slaves. *Haman* fell a Sacrifice to the Resentment of a poor mumping

ing *Few*, and was led to the Gallows, when he thought to be conducted through the Streets of *Persopolis* in Triumph.

Sometimes indeed it fell out that the Minister engross'd to himself the whole Power of an Empire ; but then he made as bad an Use of it, as the most bloody Tyrant could have done. Thus *Bogoas*, a pitiful Eunuch, being raised to the Pinacle of Power, butcher'd the royal Family that advanced him, without so much as sparing the poor Infants, and raised *Darius* to the Throne of *Persia*. This same *Darius* was the Instrument of his Country's Ruin, by not listening to the Advice of a faithful Counsellor, who would have him dismiss that expensive and unnecessary Train of Women and Slaves with which the Army was clogg'd, and employ the Savings in arming, increasing, and disciplining his Forces ; but the haughty Monarch, enraged that any Slave should presume to advise him, immediately dispatch'd him with his own Hands. The Historian says, that he afterwards repented his Rashness, and being sensible that the deceased had said nothing but the Truth, caused him to be pompously interr'd ; as if a trifling posthumous Honour could atone for the Loss of Life.

It was observed of the ancient despotic Governments of *Asia*, that the Prince and Minister were seldom safe from each other ; but as they were generally Rogues, Madmen or Fools, it was indifferent to the Community

nity which of them prevail'd; the poor People were sure to be treated like the Beasts of the Field: From whence it is plain, that weak Kings and knavish Ministers have been in those Times, what they are now, the fertile Sources of every Evil, and the heaviest Punishment Heaven can inflict.

The Commonwealths of *Greece*, it must be own'd, were the unfittest Places in the World for a Minister to play his Pranks in; the least Slip was commonly punish'd with immediate Banishment, and Confiscation of Goods and Chattels. The *Athenians* would banish a Minister, let his Innocence be ever so conspicuous, or if his publick Services were ever so great, if they thought him too wealthy and too popular; for they were of Opinion that the Fears and Jealousies of the People ought to be removed at the Expence even of the greatest and worthiest Men: And thus we may account for the Expulsion of *Miltiades*, *Aristides*, *Pericles*, *Alcibiades*, and other bright Ornaments of the *Athenian* Commonwealth. *Lycurgus*, the great Legislator of the *Lacedemonians*, being satisfy'd that a perfect Understanding between the Prince and People was the Basis and Foundation of both their Happiness; to maintain that Understanding, establish'd *Ephori*, or Inspectors, as a Kind of Mediators, who should have an Eye to the Measures and Conduct of both Sides, and preserve so equal a Balance between them, that the regal Power

Power should never decline into Severity and Tyranny, nor the Liberty of the People run into License and Rebellion. The Authority of the Ephori was very great: On certain Occasions, they expell'd and even put to Death the Kings, and abolish'd or suspended the Power of the other Magistrates, calling them to Account at Pleasure. *Agessilaus*, in the Height of his Conquests, which even struck Terror on the great King of *Persia*, stopp'd and turn'd back out of Deference to the Ephori, when they recall'd him. These wise Precautions, one would imagine, were enough to render a State everlasting; but alas! when publick Virtue dwindles, and the Magistrates cease to act with the usual Vigilance, a wicked Minister riots in Mischief, the Laws lose their Force, and a Nation thus circumstanced, falls an easy Prey to the first Invader: Such was the Fate of *Athens*, *Sparta*, and the other *Grecian* Commonwealths, which were swallow'd up by *Philip* of *Macedon*, and his Son *Alexander* the Great.

The *Romans*, while they retain'd their Virtue, were no less jealous of their Ministers. *Manlius*, for affecting Popularity by Donatives and Largeesses, was tumbled down the *Tarpeian* Rock, which he had so valiantly defended against the *Gauls*. The great Services of *Scipio Africanus*, the glorious Conqueror of *Carthage*, could not skreen him from the Censures of the People, who thought him too powerful and too popular; and he
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to avoid their Resentment, retired to a *Villa* at some Distance from *Rome*, where he obscurely ended his Days. But it has been the Misfortune of every great People, that they never long retain this salutary Spirit of Jealousy; Opulence and Ease, the Rewards of their Virtue, make them careless and indolent; and as they grow necessitous by neglecting those Maxims which render'd them great, they naturally fall into Venality and Corruption, which have been the Bane of all Nations, and more remarkably the *Romans*, whose Degeneracy furnish'd *Sylla* and *Cesar* with an Opportunity of making themselves absolute Masters of the Commonwealth, and erecting a successive Tyranny. From hence sprang that Race of Monsters whose Crimes exceed all Description. How many Thousands have they murder'd in cold Blood, for no Reason in the World but to gratify their Wantonness? Sometimes all *Asia* and *Europe* were plunder'd to indulge the Appetite of one of those Imperial Gluttons. *Nero* set Fire to *Rome*, and *Caligula* caused three Thousand Men and Women to be toss'd into the Sea for his Diversion. As for their private Crimes, such as Parricide, Incest, Bestiality, Murder, Sodomy, &c. they were so frequent, that they seem'd to make Part of their Prerogative, and are mentioned by the Historians as only Things of course. One would imagine that such Brutes as these were sufficient to scourge Mankind, without the Affi-

Assistance of roguish Ministers ; but so it was : They had their *Sejanus's*, their *Pallas's*, their *Ruffinus's*, and a Thousand such Villains, who had teeming Heads to contrive mischief, and never fail'd putting the last hand to every flagrant Roguery. At last the Spirit of the People being quite broke, the most contemptible Enemy proved too hard for them, and the *Roman* Name was lost in an Inundation of *Huns, Goths, Vandals*, and other barbarous Nations.

The vast Empire of *Rome* being thus destroy'd, several Kingdoms and Principalities were erected upon its Ruins, which were at first free ; but since for the most part reduced to a State of absolute Slavery, by standing Armies, and by the corrupt practices of Ministers, who tho' often very blundering and cowardly in their Negotiations with foreign Princes, yet find ways and means to load their Countryman with Chains. There are now but six free States in the World, and theſe for the most part are very small and inconsiderable, especially when compared to the rest of the Globe. These free States are *England, Holland, Swisserland, Venice, Genoa* and *Sweden*. Some even doubt whether Liberty has not long since taken her Flight from most of those Countries. I'll say nothing of *England*, because every one of my Readers can judge of the State of its Freedom, as well as I can inform them ; and as to *Swisserland*, it is proper its Inhabitants should have

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something to make them amends for the Poverty and Barrenness of the Country ; but with respect to *Holland*, 'tis thought that the States are full as arbitrary there as the Czar of *Muscovy*, or the grand Monarch can be in their respective Countries. The Liberty of *Venice* and *Genoa* seems to extend no farther than to a few noble Families. Some will have it that *Poland* is a free Country ; but how can that be, when the common People bear such Burthens as are scarce known in the most savage Nations ? Every Lord has an unlimited Power over his Vassals, whom he treats scarce so well as we do our Negroes in *America*. The little Republicks of *Luca*, *St. Marino*, *Geneva*, *Dantzick* and *Hamburg*, 'tis true are free ; but as they are no more in fact than single Cities, they scarce can be look'd upon as an Addition to the Number of free States. — Here we must observe that no one Nation upon Earth owes its Liberty to good Princes or Ministers, but to the Watchfulness of the People to the nature of their Government, or to some whimsical Circumstance. The *Dutch* first asserted their Liberty by the Assistance of their foreign Friends, and can never be enslaved but by a foreign Enemy ; for the seven Provinces being seven distinct Governments, it will be difficult, if not impracticable, for a Minister to make them all subservient to his Designs. There is no Nation upon Earth whose Liberty has been ofner attempted upon by wicked Prin-

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ces and rapacious Ministers than the *English*; but that brave People, though sometimes reduced to the Brink of Destruction, always recover'd themselves, and had the good Fortune to turn the Tables upon their very Oppressors. If ever they are enslaved, it must be by standing Armies and corrupt Parliaments. The *Swiss* preserve their Liberty by their Poverty; there being little or nothing for a foreign Enemy or a domestick Thief to plunder. Luxury, which has destroy'd the Liberty of most other Nations, preserves that of *Venice*; for the People being enervated with Ease and all sorts of publick Diversions, give themselves no Trouble about State Affairs, nor the least Disturbance to the Government; which being divided into several subordinate Branches, as so many Checks upon one another, can never be hurt or dissolved but by some foreign Enemy. *Genoa* is beholden for her Liberty to the Jealousy that subsists between the Houses of *Austria*, *Bourbon* and *Sardinia*; neither of whom would be glad to see the other possess'd of so wealthy a City and the Territory belonging to it is so small, that it would cost an Invader but little Time or Trouble to overrun it. As to the *Swedes*, its true the present Monarch has made them a Compliment of their Liberties; but it was with a View of reconciling them to his Accession to the Throne; for very few Princes ever gave up

what they call their Rights, if they thought themselves in a Condition to maintain them.

'Tis now above a thousand Years since the several Nations of *Europe* taking Advantage of the Downfal of the *Roman* Empire, have form'd themselves into independent States; but how few good Princes, or honest and able Ministers have the happiest of those Nations to boast of in that Compass of Time, *Spain* as near as I can compute, has had to her Share but four worthy Kings and two good Ministers; *France* six Kings and three Ministers; *England* five Kings or Queens, and two Ministers. As to the rest. if they were not so whimsically wicked as those Monsters of *Rome*; if they did not rob and murder through Wantonness, it was because the Laws kept them under some Restraint; but then their Dissimulation and Hypocrisy were perhaps as mischievous as the bare faced Iniquity of the *Roman* or *Asiatick* Tyrants; for who can guard against dark Schemes and villanous Plots? Their Ministers had seldom any thing to recommend them but a little low Cunning and a slavish and abject Obsequiousness to the Will of their Masters. Hence it must follow, that the governing part of Mankind have always been what they now are: Being drunk with Power, no Wonder they should be addicted to Blunders, Caprice, and every sort of Wickedness. Some Princes indeed, who were in themselves absolutely wicked, stood
fair

fair in the Eye of the World, on account of their brutal Valour, or their Dexterity in destroying their Fellow Creatures; whereby they acquired the dazzling Name of Conquerors, though they were in fact but a better Species of Tyrants.

In this Nation we have had such Instances of Kings being dethroned, and even put to Death, and of Ministers being banish'd and beheaded, that it is a Wonder any Attempt should be made to stretch the Privilege, or to enslave the Subject. His present Majesty, we must own, is too much a Friend to Liberty to give the least Room for Jealousy or Apprehension; but terrible Examples have not always Efficacy enough to prevent the Encroachment of Power: Sometimes a Repetition of the same Severities is necessary to check the Progress of Ambition, which seldom flags. Though Heaven deliver us from the Calamities of a Civil War; when that Evil once breaks out, there is no knowing where it will end; like an irresistible Torrent, it bears all down before it; and hence it is visible that popular Rage is infinitely more dangerous, and ought more to be guarded against than even regal or ministerial Folly. What Rivers of Blood have been shed all over the three Kingdoms for twelve Years successively, about the middle of the last Century? What Acts of Cruelty, what unnatural Animosities have we not heard of? In those dreadful Times,
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it was no uncommon Thing for one Brother to thirst after the Blood of another ; for a Son to wish Destruction of the Father : Majesty was so little regarded, that our Sovereign was publickly executed on a Scaffold like a Felon : A great number of our Nobility and Gentry fell in the same violent manner ; and what were the Fruits of these bloody Doings ? Have they removed the Evils that were complain'd of ? So far from it, that we fell into worse : Anarchy, Confusion, and the Overthrow of the best of Constitutions were the sorrowful Consequences of this outrageous Conduct. Nay, the Miseries of those Times affect us, partly this very Day, for without them the Royal Family would have had no Opportunity of imbibing Popery and the Principles of arbitrary Power in foreign Countries, neither would there probably be any Occasion for the great Revolution in 1688, which has entailed upon Us and our Posterity a Debt of fifty Millions, nor should we at this Time be bug-bear'd by a Popish Pretender to the Crown. The unhappy King who fell a Victim to the Fury of those Times was counted a Prince of as much Virtue and Sense and as free from Ambition as any of the Age he lived in ; and yet is certain that he and his Ministers were Aggressors in this Quarrel ; being of an easy Temper he suffer'd himself to be govern'd too much by his Queen who was an imperious Princess, and by the Earl of *Strafford*, who undoubtedly was

a Man of extraordinary Abilities and faithful to his King, but perfidious to his Country. Moreover King CHARLES the First was not only loaded with his own Misconduct, but with that of his Father, who had drawn upon himself the general Contempt of his Subjects, by straining the Prerogative too high and neglecting the frequent use of parliaments, he also took extraordinary Pains to inculcate the ridiculous Doctrine of hereditary and indefeasible Right, and instead of supporting the Interest of his People, and the Honour of his Crown, he suffered himself to be baffled and insulted by all the neighbouring Powers, and encouraged religious Contests which, contributed not a little to the Increase of that violent Storm, which for many Years was gathering on all Sides, so that they may justly say that the Foundation of the Civil Wars was laid in Reign of King *James* the First, and the Son was forced to expiate with his Blood the Guilt of his Father as well as his own.

The Constitution being thus overturn'd, and the sovereign Authority not only lodged in the Hands of a Man who wanted neither Resolution nor Cunning to support it; but even settled in a successive Usurpation, the Royal Family was obliged to wander from Country to Country, scarce without any Support, but the secret Contributions of a few loyal Subjects, and without the least Hopes of a Restoration, yet contrary to all Appearances restored they were, and though the new Monarch suffered every

every Hardship during the twelve Years of his Banishment, and must have known by Experience the Value of Money; yet he was so negligently profuse, as if he ever had the Great *Mogul's* Treasures at Command. The recent Catastrophe of his Father did not in the least check his Ambition, neither did Adversity (of which he had a large Share) damp the Gaiety of his Nature, or his Pronsess to Sensuality. At first he found means to corrupt his Parliament, and went on for some Years in an uninterrupted Course of Pleasure and Extravagance; but the Means of Corruption falling short, the Parliament began to listen to the Dictates of their Conscience, they loudly exclaimed against the arbitrary Measures of the Court, and would have proceeded farther, had they not been dissolved. The King being not supplied with Money as usual, he became a Pensioner to *France*, he sold *Dunkirk*, shut up the Exchequer, and thereby ruined Thousands of his Subjects who had deposited their Fortunes there for Security, he broke the Charter of the City of *London*, and of several others of the principal Corporations, and was resolved to rule without Parliament seeing the frequent ones he had called in the Compass of a few Years proved as violent as those in the Days of his Father: These Proceedings put the Nation into a general Ferment, and would probably have produced new Troubles if the Death of *Charles* had not disconcerted some Schemes that were carrying

ing on, so that the Storm was destin'd to burst upon the Head of his Brother *James*.

'Tis evident, by the publick Conduct of this King, that he partook too much of that political Madness, to which most Princes and Statesmen are liable; and yet in private Life he was remarkable for his Sense and Wit, which would make one apt to think that blundering is, by some kind of fatality, annexed to the publick Character of a Prince, or a Minister, let them shine ever so much in Private: *Charles* was an excellent Companion, and so extremely Affable, that whenever he was in Company with his Favourites, he would lay aside all Majesty, as a Clog to the Freedom of Conversation, and insisted they should call him nothing but plain *Charles*. A Story goes of him, that when he was at *Oxford*, to meet the new Parliament that was appointed to sit there, he retired in the Evening, according to custom, with a few select Friends, and after having diverted them for some Hours, with that Vivacity which was natural to him, he grew, all of a sudden, very Silent and Grave, which made a Gentleman in Company presume to ask the Reason of it; *Why* (said *Charles*) *I am very much in pain about my Brother James, how he will behave when he has my Rogues to deal with.* He was not much mistaken in his Apprehensions about his Brother, as the Event has since shewn; and indeed there was too much

Room to apprehend a State Convulsion, if we consider the Discontents and loud Clamours, of which *Charles's* Conduct was the Cause: If we consider *James's* too credulous and easy Nature, which could not fail exposing him to the dark Stratagems of perfidious Courtiers; besides, he was a professed *Papist*, and, as such, was voted by the House of Commons incapable of succeeding to the Throne; but notwithstanding all these Obstacles, he would, in all Probability, have kept his Ground, had he not confided too much in his Minister, who led him into all the Measures that rendered him Odious to the People. It was S—— that caused Father *Peters* to be made one of the Privy Council, and procured Liberty for the Monks to appear in their Religious Habits. It was S—— that set on Foot, or at least he had a principal Share in *Monmouth's* Rebellion, and chiefly promoted the barbarous Executions in the *West*; in order to render the King still more Black. The Odium of this Affair, I know, is generally thrown upon the Lord Chancellor *Jeffries*; but if my Information is right, he was so far from leaning to Severity, that he told the King, that then was the Time for him to rivet himself in the Hearts of his People, by an Act of Oblivion: But here, it seems, he was over-ruled by S——. In short, it was S—— that conducted the Negotiation with the Prince of *Orange*, and brought that Affair

to maturity, for which, indeed, his Country ought to respect his Memory; but it is to be wished, for his Reputation, he had taken more honourable Methods to accomplish his Designs. The Dethroning of King *James*, was certainly a piece of natural Justice; but a most glaring Instance of Infatuation in him, for suffering himself to be betrayed into such ridiculous Measures by mean Monks, roguish Ministers, and wrong-headed Friends; he was naturally Honest and Parsimonious, a great encourager of Trade, a lover of his People, and so well beloved by them, that nothing but the most absurd Conduct could have hurt him in their Affections. With regard to the Revolution, all Parties now agree, that it was the most glorious Push that ever was made by an oppressed Nation; above fifty Years Experience vouch for it, that it was none of those rash ill-judged Expedients that beget a late and impotent Sorrow; for alas! such is the short sightedness of human Nature, that sometimes what we take to be our strongest Security proves our utter Ruin, and our most ardent Wishes, when obtained, become our greatest Curse.

*evertere Domos totas optantibus ipsis
Dii faciles*

The easy Gods have destroyed whole Houses, and poured down utter Ruin at the Request of the very Sufferers.

'Tis certain, that the Revolution was a most favourable Event to this Nation, and could have procured us all the Blessings a free Nation could expect, if the Rogues of those Times had not been more intent upon skreening their Knavery, or getting Money, than serving their Country: To this we may add, the little improvement that was made of the Duke of *Marlborough's* Successes; and some late Proceedings, which may very well be scored up to the Article of Blunders.

Thus have I traced Time from the earliest Ages of the World, to the memorable *Epocha* we now live in, and made it clearly appear, that the Transactions of former Princes, and Ministers, as well as most of the Moderns, were nothing but a Series of Blunders. It must indeed be owned, that the Blunders of the present Age have something very characteristical in them; formerly, as well as now, we made Peace and War out of Season; we fought when we should be quiet, and we were quiet when we should fight: our Treaties, 'tis true, were sometimes ridiculous, but we always meant they should be observed; but now they are looked upon as unmeaning Ceremonies, and calculated to amuse Fools; when we equipped a Squadron, or went upon an Expedition, either by Sea or Land, however ill-timed, it was always understood, that our Design was to face the Enemy, which now is the farthest from our Thoughts, we are equally Pacifick, equally

qually Inofensive, both in Peace and War; we are so very consistent in our Blunders, that Blundering is reduced into an Art; and least our Allies should engage us in any Broils, where fighting might be required, we have fairly deserted them, insomuch that for many Years past we have not had one Friend left, except the Duke of *Saxegotha*, and the Prince of *Hesse*. This innovation in Politicks was, at first, somewhat Misterious; but now it is so well understood, that when we send out a powerful Fleet, no one asks any Questions about it, because it occurs to every one at first Sight, that we only design to make a Show. If a Squadron rendezvou-
ses at S——d, we are not troubled, as formerly, with the Impertinence of Foreign Ministers, to know the Destination of it; they are as sensible as we can be, that we would hurt ourselves rather than even our most obnoxious Neighbours; Ease, Gaiety and Pleasure are, at present, our only Pursuit; insomuch, that *Cleopatra's* gilded Barge, when she sailed up the Nile with her Lover, did not make a more shining Figure than one of our Tenders does at *Spit-head*. As to Treaties, How can we help it, if the *French* or *Spaniards*, and others, break them? Must we make *Don Quixotes* of ourselves, and fight them all? If one Treaty is neglected, we'll conclude another to enforce the Observance of it; and if this should not do, we'll make a third, and so on, till we
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sooth our Enemies into a good Humour, which is much safer, and better, than exposing our Lives, and spilling the Blood of our Fellow-Creatures. Formerly, it was the Custom to send the best Soldiers upon the hardest Service; according to the old saying, *Durissimi milites ad fortissima mittuntur*: But now we have found out a more profound method of Reasoning, for surely those who stand most in need of Skill and Experience, ought to be sent where it is to be had, and therefore it was fitter to send the New raised Men to *St. Augustine* and *Carthage*, than the Veteran Troops; and if they miscarried, and most of them died before those two Places, it ought to be imputed to the Climate, or to the Chance of War, and not to any Fault in the present System of Politicks. When we go upon any Expedition, can it be said, that it is never our Design to fight? Have we not lately given an Instance of our uncommon Ardor when we met the *French* in the *Mediterranean*? And if the cowardly *Spaniards* keep so close in their Harbours that we cannot come at them, we must wait till they venture out.

These Reasons sufficiently shew, that *England* is not at a Loss to account for her Conduct, as most other Nations are.

I would be glad to know why the *Dutch* remain so quiet and unmoved, while their Neighbour's House is on Fire; and while the formidable Enemy of the Liberties of
Europe

Europe is tearing down those Mounds which were the only Obstacles to her Ambition? What is become of that brave Indignation that swelled the Breast of every honest *Dutchman*, when *France* pretended to prescribe Laws? What? is the Ballance of Power no more? Have the most haughty Powers no Resource left to secure their Territories, but Treaties of Neutrality? What do they think will become of them, when the House of *Austria* is pulled down? Do they expect that the Faith of Treaties will save them from Ruin? Or, supposing they were all joined in a Confederacy, will they be a Match for the House of *Bourbon*, possessed of the Trade of *Europe*, and of three most powerful Monarchies, besides the Mines, and vast Dominions in *America*? O the fatal Insensibility of the present Age! this every one sees, this every one apprehends; and yet not one Step is taken to avert the impending Ruin: That grand Monarch treats the *European* Powers just as *Phillip* of *Macedon* did the States of *Greece*, when he was preparing Chains for them: Some he Bullies into a shameful Inactivity; others he draws into his Alliance by specious Promises; others he Bribes, or sets at Variance with those Neighbours from whom he has most to apprehend; and thus he is left at Liberty to pursue his destructive Schemes.

As to the late Treaty of Neutrality, concluded between *France* and *Hanover*, I know
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it has been made the Subject of much Noise and Wonder; it has been complained, that the Ballance of Power was, thereby, absolutely given up; that the Pragmatick Sanction was set aside; and that the unlimited Vote of Credit, granted at the Close of the last Parliament, was rendered quite ineffectual. But, admitting all this were True, how could it be helped? Was it not better to make some disadvantageous Concessions for the Present, than ruin all by a fruitless Resistance? Is the Electorate of *Hanover* able, singly, to cope with *France*, or to withstand an Army of fifty or sixty thousand Men?

But, say the Malecontents, What is the Reason that no Care has been taken to provide against those Misfortunes by proper Alliances? Has not his Majesty done, in this Case, all that Human Wisdom, or Foresight, could suggest. by engaging a Body of *Danes* and *Hessians*, which he thought would be sufficient, to make Head against the Elector of *Bavaria*, or any other single Prince of the Empire; for who could imagine the King of *Prussia* had any such Project in his Head, as that of conquering *Silesia*; or that he would enter into any Combination with *France*? Could any one Dream, that the King of *Poland* would join in plucking the Wings of the *Austrian* Eagle; or that not one Prince of *Germany* would oppose the Passage of the *French* Troops? Is it not very extraordinary, that the *Dutch*, who were

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Guarantees of the Pragmatick Saction, never stirred in Favour of the Queen of *Hungary*, with whose Cause the Ballance of Power, and the Liberties of Europe are blended? Who would have thought that when *France*, who had guaranteed the Pragmatick Sanction in the most solemn Manner, would be so forward to break it? These were such Events as the most penetrating Genius that ever lived could not pretend to foresee. And what had his Majesty to do in this *Dilemma*, but to secure his Frontiers by a Treaty of Neutrality, which it is very plain he could not do by force of Arms? Besides, this Treaty is only Conditional and Temporary, his Majesty can set it aside whenever he finds himself in a Condition to act with Vigour for the common Cause, which 'tis expected will be very soon, by the Assistance which *Russia* is sending into the Empire, and by the vigorous Resolutions lately taken by the *Dutch*.

There is one thing, indeed, which seems to be quite inconsistent with our Honour, our Interest, and the Ballance of Power; which is, our suffering the *Spaniards* to land an Army quietly in *Italy*, in order to swallow up *Lombardy*, *Tuscany*, *Parma*, *Placentia*, &c. which they can easily do, since the *Venetians* remain Neuter, and the King of *Sardinia*, alone, is not Powerful enough to deal with the joint Forces of *Naples* and *Spain*. 'Tis true, some People give out, that the *Spanish* Tran-

sports were dispersed by a Storm, and driven into the Ports of *Spain* and *Biscay*, and consequently, that the Expedition cannot take Place this Year. But supposing all this; Must the Ballance of Power owe its Preservation to an accidental Tempest? Where was the brave A——I H——ck all that while? Surely this Connivance. or Toleration, call it by what Name you will, cannot be one of the Secret Articles of a certain late Treaty.

To this I Answer, That though every Potentate, except *France*, be interested in the Ballance of Power, yet *England* less than any, because our Navy, and the Sea, are our grand Security. Let *France*, or *Spain*, make what Conquests they please upon the Continent, so long as we are Masters by Sea, we have not much to apprehend.

The Power of *France* is certainly very formidable; but should not this make us the more earnest to stop it's Growth? Shall we, by a cowardly Despondency, contribute to its Greatness? There is nothing but what resolution, Unanimity, and good Management can effect. Thus it was, that the little Republick of *Thebes* withstood, and even vanquished the potent *Lacedemonians*; and thus the *Athenians* made Head against the great Empire of *Persia*, and commonly were Victorious, both by Sea and Land, 'Tis indeed complained, we have no great Generals, whose Skill might make Amends for our want of Strength, and put us
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upon a Level with the Power of the Enemy : But *France* has no more to boast of, in this Respect, than we ; and what is it that distinguishes or points out great Men, but Time and Opportunity ? Let us go to work, and no question but latent Merit will soon be brought to light.

Hectora quis nosset felix si Troja fuisset.

'Tis now said, that the World is trusting to two great Men ; the one a General ; the other a Statesman : The General is in *Asia* ; but where to fix the Statesman I know not : Some say he lives in *France*, which is contradicted by others, who know not how to account for some former and late Transactions ; they cannot, to this Hour, find out the Reason for sending such a pitiful Squadron, and such a handful of Men, to the Relief of *Dantzick* : Why a Squadron should be sent to the *Baltick*, not long ago, when there was no visible Occasion for it, and none should be sent now that the *Swedes* are actually at War with the *Muscovites* ? Why such numerous Armies should be continually upon the March in *Flanders*, *France*, and divers Parts of *Germany*, without any Declaration of War ; which made a *German* Officer humorously say, that If any Virtuoso was at a Loss for the Perpetual Motion, he might find it in the *French* Army. The *Craftsman* said, in one of his

late Papers, that the Motive of these Marches is to get Money. How does this appear? The *Monfieurs* behave very quietly, without robbing or plundering. But perhaps they Scorn these pitiful Doings, they may expect Money by the Lump, from those they think can very well afford it; they are hardly such Blunderers as to agree to Neutralities, or to forego the Plunder of an opulent Country for nothing.

The Cardinal, 'tis true, has done great things; but may not this be more owing to his Power than his Wisdom? 'Tis an easy Matter for a Minister to be successful, when he has every thing at Command, and nothing to obstruct his Success: Wise Men may Project; but what does it avail, if they want the Power to execute. This puts me in Mind of the Answer made by the Emperor *Charles* the Fifth, to the *Venetian* Ambassador, when he was highly extolling the Wisdom of the Senate of *Venice*. 'Tis true, your Senate (said the Emperor) consists of very wise Men; but I'd engage, twenty Thousand of my Blockheads would baffle all their Wisdom.

These, and a great many other Arguments, are made use of to prove, that this *Parragon* of a Statesman we are now seeking with *Diogene's* Lanthorn, is no *Frenchman*. Let us examine, Whether a certain great Man in our Nation has any Title to this high Rank.

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'Tis certain, that he has had greater Difficulties to struggle with than the Cardinal; and yet he has been full as Successful; at least in Domestick Affairs. But the Malecontents would have it, that he brought all those Difficulties upon himself, by pursuing wicked or foolish Measures: That his Success was the Result of Bribery, and not Wisdom, and, they fear, will terminate in his Country's Ruin; that the many weak Treaties he has concluded, shew his want of Skill in Negotiations; and that he knows not how to make a proper Improvement of Peace, nor yet to conduct a War.

Whether this be the Language of Truth, or Prejudice, is too knotty a Question for me to resolve. Must it then remain a Doubt, Whether the whole Earth can, at this Time, shew two *Great Men*? Good Lord! How different is the present Age from the last?

While those great Rivals, King *William*, and *Lewis* the Fourteenth, the *Czar Peter* the Great, and *Charles* of *Sweden*, amazed the Globe, with the Number and Greatness of their Exploits, we had no Occasion to have recourse to *Asia* for a Hero; neither should we be at a stand for a consummate Statesman, while *Godolphin* conducted the Affairs of *England*, and *Heinsius* those of *Holland*.

Were these Great Men to make their Appearance a second Time upon Earth, how greatly would they be surprized at the Alterations

affairs brought about in a few Years? *Lorrain* in the Hands of *France*. *Naples* and *Sicily* in the Possession of another Branch of the House of *Bourbon*; most of the Princes of the Empire helping *France* to pull down the House of *Austria*, and thereby destroying what would be their future Security against the Power of *France*. How will those Princes curse their fatal Credulity, when they will see, and perhaps sooner than they expect, their Territories torn from them, and disposed of at the Will of that insidious Court; the Liberties of the *Germanick* Body trampled upon, and not one Prince in *Europe* to call to their Assistance. What a strange Infatuation must possess the present Generation! to shut their Eyes against those approaching Evils, instead of preventing them? Some Mistakes there are which may admit of an Excuse; for Example, the Queen of *Hungary's* refusing to comply with the King of *Prussia's* Proposals, was certainly an Error in Politicks: But then she expected her Allies would come to her Assistance, and never suffer her to be reduced to her present woful Condition; and she thought that her granting his *Prussian* Majesty's Demands would encourage other Pretenders, which, to most other People would seem to be solid Reasons; but there can be no such Excuse for the Conduct of some other Powers I could mention: On the contrary one would imagine, that they were striving to out blunder each other. If a
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wise Man errs, he takes care to recover himself as soon as possible: But if a weak Man commits a Blunder, like *Marplot* in the Play, he is sure to stumble into another, and from that into a third, till he is up to the Neck in Mud, and at his Wits end, how to get out.

Now to apply this to the present Posture of Affairs; we are fallen into such a Complication of Mistakes, that there is just a bare Possibility of our extricating ourselves with Honour or Safety. If we continue the War any longer, upon the Foot it is now carried on, it will go very near to undo us; not so much because we may have the united Power of *France* and *Spain* to deal with, as on Account of the irreparable Wound our Trade will receive by such a pusillanimous Conduct. If we have Peace under the Mediation of *France*, it must be a dishonourable one, and and more destructive than an unsuccessful War.

If we seriously reflect upon the general Calamity which manifests itself every Day, in various Shapes, we need no more to deter us from any Step that may be productive of further Misery. Our Streets already swarm with miserable Objects; never were Bankrupts more frequent. The few Merchants who venture to follow Trade, are undone by *Spanish* Depredations. The others, warned by the sad Disasters of their Brethren, consult their own Safety, and retire into the Country; hence a total Stagnation of almost every
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Branch of Business. Are not these Evils too grievous to admit of an Increase? Or do they not rather call aloud for a Redress.

Thank Heaven, we have one great Recourse left, which is the Wisdom and Steadiness of Parliament: They have often rescu'd us from foreign Enemies, however Powerful or Numerous: and from vile Ministers, however Artful; and we are not to suppose that they will look on, at a Time their Country groans under the severest Grievances, both Foreign and Domestick, it ever was visited with since the Conquest. It is from them all *Europe* expects its Deliverance; for most of the neighbouring Nations stand so much in Awe of the Power of *France*, that, be they ever so well inclined, they dare not declare themselves, till they hear the *British* Lion roar. 'Tis scarce conceivable what this Nation can do, when its Strength is properly exerted; and though the Sea separates it from the rest of the Globe, yet it has often spread Terror and Conquest all over the Continent: *Edward* the Third, *Henry* the Fifth, our two renowned Queens, *Elizabeth* and *Anne*, and particularly old *Oliver*, were, in their Times the Arbiters of all *Europe*. Therefore, instead of sinking under our Burthens, let us resume that glorious Spirit, that inflexible Resolution, which rendered this Nation formerly so Terrible; and who knows but Heaven may afford us that Relief which is not, altogether, to be expected from our own Wisdom.

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